

CALIFORNIA OCCUPATIONAL GUIDES



LOCKSMITHS AND SAFE REPAIRERS



WHAT DOES A LOCKSMITH DO?

Have you ever locked yourself out of your home or car? Have you lost the keys to your car, home, or a locked cabinet? Has your home ever been broken into requiring the replacement of damaged locks? Have you rekeyed locks because of security concerns? These common situations require the skills of LOCKSMITHS.

Locksmiths develop and maintain security systems for residential and commercial customers. For example, they rekey door locks in a warehouse, change the combination of an office safe, or install deadbolt locks in a home. Rekeying is changing the tumblers of a lock to fit a new key. Rekeying a master key system is a time-consuming, complicated job. In a master key system, some keys must open all doors, others open several doors,

CALIFORNIA OCCUPATIONAL GUIDE - NUMBER 397
2005

INTEREST AREA
REALISTIC



while most keys open individual doors. In some hotels and other lodging places, Locksmiths install security systems that require an electronic key card to open guest room doors. Some Locksmiths install and repair electronic burglar alarms and surveillance systems that signal police or firefighters when break-ins or fires occur.

Most Locksmiths work in small repair shops that serve residential and commercial customers. Locksmiths often specialize in one aspect of their trade. In-house Locksmiths work for large organizations such as colleges, universities, school districts, industrial complexes, hospitals, local and State government, and large hotels.

Locksmiths perform the following tasks:

- Take apart mechanical or electrical locking devices and repair or replace worn tumblers, springs, and other parts, using hand tools.
- Insert new or repaired tumblers into lock to change combination.
- Repair and adjust safes, vault doors, and vault components, using hand tools, lathes, drill presses, and welding and acetylene cutting apparatus.
- Cut new or duplicate keys, using keycutting machine.
- Install safes, vault doors, and deposit boxes according to blueprints, using equipment such as powered drills, taps, dies, truck crane, and dolly.
- Drill open safe locks.
- Move picklock in cylinder to open locks without keys.
- Remove interior and exterior finishes on safes and vaults and spray on new finishes.
- Keep record of company locks and keys.
- Refer to manufacturers' manuals that describe the construction and working of various locks.

- Verify and document identification of persons who request a locked door be opened.

Safe Repairers perform these additional tasks:

- Install safes, vault doors, and deposit boxes according to blueprints, using equipment such as powered drills, taps, dies, truck cranes, and dollies.
- Open safe locks by drilling.
- Remove interior and exterior finishes on safes and vaults, and spray on new finishes.

WHAT SKILLS ARE IMPORTANT?

Important skills, knowledge, and abilities for Locksmiths include:

- Mechanical – Knowledge of machines and tools, including their designs, uses, repair, and maintenance.
- Engineering and Technology – Knowledge of the practical application of engineering science and technology.
- Installation – Installing equipment, machines, wiring, or programs to meet specifications.
- Repairing – Repairing machines or systems using the needed tools.
- Equipment Selection – Determining the kind of tools and equipment needed to do a job.
- Troubleshooting – Determining causes of operating errors and deciding what to do about it.
- Arm-Hand Steadiness – The ability to keep your hand and arm steady while moving your arm or while holding your arm and hand in one position.
- Manual Dexterity – The ability to quickly move your hand, your hand together with your arm, or your two hands to grasp, manipulate, or assemble objects.
- Wrist-Finger Speed – The ability to make fast, simple, repeated movements of the fingers, hands, and wrists.
- Finger Dexterity – The ability to make precisely coordinated movements of the fingers of one or both hands to grasp, manipulate, or assemble very small objects.

Locksmith work will appeal to those who enjoy working independently and like activities that include practical, hands-on problems and solutions. Locksmiths need public contact skills as customers often feel anxious when needing the services of a Locksmith.

WHAT'S THE WORK ENVIRONMENT?

Working conditions vary by Locksmith specialization. Most Locksmiths work out of small shops. They are also found in hardware, home improvement, and department stores which are usually clean and well ventilated. Some Locksmiths drive to emergency jobs which can occur in the evening, on weekends, as well as outdoors in bad weather. Others maintain a route of scheduled service for commercial clients. All Locksmiths occasionally work in awkward positions for long periods of time.

Union Membership

Union membership depend on the size and type of employer. Union membership is more often available for those working for larger organizations, such as education, hospitals, and government.

WHAT'S THE CALIFORNIA JOB OUTLOOK?

The following information is from the occupational projections produced by the Employment Development Department (EDD) Labor Market Information Division (LMID):

Locksmiths and Safe Repairers

| | |
|--|-------|
| Estimated number of workers in 2002: | 2,800 |
| Estimated number of workers in 2012: | 3,300 |
| Projected Growth 2002-2012: | 17.9% |
| Est. openings due to separations by 2012: | 900 |
| <i>These figures do not include self-employment.</i> | |

This occupation will grow at an average rate with all occupations in California. Total job opportunities in this occupation from 2002 through 2012 will be 1,400—about 140 jobs annually. Experienced Locksmiths should find little trouble finding employment. Trainees will face competition for employers with a large enough staff to support trainee positions. Some employers will accept formal training in lieu of experience.

Trends

Consumers are increasingly concerned about safety and security needs for home, commercial, and public spaces, and demand for Locksmiths should keep pace with that concern. Use of electronic security requires more highly skilled workers to install and maintain systems.

Automotive work is a growing market for locksmiths as newer vehicles have increasingly sophisticated electronic and high security locks beyond the scope of their automotive mechanics. Automotive dealers subcontract the work to a locksmith. Investigative Locksmiths is a developing specialty for experienced Locksmiths. Investigative Locksmiths work with law enforcement officials and insurance companies to combat insurance fraud. They offer expert testimony during litigation and assist claimants in disputed insurance claims.

WHAT DOES THE JOB PAY?

California Earnings

The following information is from the Occupational Employment Statistics Survey of Employers by EDD/LMID:

Locksmiths and Safe Repairers 2005 Wages

| | | | |
|-------------------------|----------|----|---------|
| Hourly wages range from | \$12.49 | to | \$22.37 |
| Average hourly wage | \$17.54 | | |
| Average annual wage | \$36,492 | | |

These figures do not include self-employment.

Nationally, 43 percent of Locksmiths and Safe Repairers are self-employed. Self-employed Locksmiths may be small entrepreneurs or they may run an operation with contracts from large businesses. Trainees often start at minimum wage. Locksmiths sometimes receive a commission ranging from five to fifty percent for work done after regular business hours.

Hours

A 40 to 48-hour work week is common for Locksmiths. Self-employed Locksmiths work 44 to 60 hours per week. Locksmiths frequently work on call evenings and weekends to respond to emergency service calls.

Benefits

Locksmiths may receive holiday leave, vacations, sick pay, as well as health insurance.

HOW DO I PREPARE FOR THE JOB?

Education and Training

Many learn locksmithing through on-the-job training. The California Training and Education Programs list 14 schools offering Locksmith training. High school classes useful to preparing for a Locksmith career include mathematics, electronics, mechanical drawing, and metalworking. Since many Locksmiths are self-employed, business education courses would also be useful.

Licensing and Certification

Locksmiths must be licensed by the Bureau of Security and Investigations, Department of Consumer Affairs. Licensure requires submission of fingerprints to the Federal Bureau of Investigation for a criminal record background check. Licenses are renewed every two years. Exempt from the licensing requirement are those Locksmiths who only duplicate keys and Locksmiths who exclusively work in-house for large organizations. Locksmiths who work on alarms must also obtain an Alarm Agent License from the Bureau of Security and Investigative Services. Some California cities require that Locksmiths obtain a police permit.

Continuing Education

There are no required continuing education requirements for Locksmiths. However, Associated Locksmiths of America offers advanced training and four levels of certification with Certified Master Locksmith being the highest level. Locksmiths may need continuing education to keep up with the increasing use of electronic technology.

HOW DO I FIND THE JOB?

Direct application to employers remains one of the most effective job search methods. Locksmiths work out of small repair shops, department and hardware stores, or maintain large security systems for government agencies, schools, college campuses, and industrial plants.

Search these **yellow page** headings for listings of private firms:

- Locks and Locksmiths
- Safes and Vaults
- Hospitals
- Colleges and Universities
- Hotels
- Property Management

The following Internet resources can be helpful to the job search process:

America's Career InfoNet
www.acinet.org

America's Job Bank
www.ajb.dni.us

CalJOBSSM
www.caljobs.ca.gov

Job Search and Resume Writing
www.worksmart.ca.gov/success_tips_menu.html

Local Job Service Offices
www.edd.ca.gov/jsrep/jsloc.htm

Occupational Information Network (O*NET) Online
<http://online.onetcenter.org>

One-Stop Career Centers List
www.edd.ca.gov/ONE-STOP/pic.htm

For statewide and local projections, wages, employers by county, and other occupational information go to www.labormarketinfo.edd.ca.gov and select *Find an Occupation Profile*.

WHERE CAN THIS JOB LEAD?

Locksmiths advance in pay as they develop skills and experience. Opening their own business is another option for Locksmith career growth.

OTHER SOURCES OF INFORMATION

Associated Locksmiths of America
 3003 Live Oak Street
 Dallas, TX 75204
 (214) 827-1701
www.aloa.org

Contractors State License Board
 9821 Business Park Drive
 Sacramento, CA 95827
 (800) 321-2752
www.cslb.ca.gov

Bureau of Security and Investigative Services
 401 S Street, Suite 101
 Sacramento, CA 95814
 (916) 322-4000
www.dca.ca.gov

International Association of
 Investigative Locksmiths
 1507 Whitmarsh Circle
 Severn, MD 21144
<http://iail.org>

CA Division of Apprenticeship Standards
 For the closest district office, visit
www.dir.ca.gov/DAS/das.html

RELATED OCCUPATIONAL GUIDES

| | |
|---|---------|
| Heating, Air Conditioning, and Refrigeration Mechanics | No. 32 |
| Appliance Repairers (Home and Garden) | No. 101 |
| Industrial Machinery Mechanics | No. 136 |
| Vending Machine Mechanics | No. 358 |
| Office Machine Servicers | No. 405 |
| Instrumentation Technicians | No. 485 |
| Burglar and Fire Alarm Installers and Repairers | No. 518 |
| Maintenance Repairers, General Utility | No. 560 |

OCCUPATIONAL CODE REFERENCES

SOC (*Standard Occupational Classification*)
Locksmiths and Safe Repairers 49-9094

O*NET (*Occupational Information Network*)
Locksmiths and Safe Repairers 49-9094.00

OES (*Occupational Employment Statistics*)
Locksmiths and Safe Repairers 85923